

BLACK FLAG

FOR ANARCHIST RESISTANCE

30p

3RD OCTOBER 1988

Sabotaging Apartheid

The liberal response to Apartheid is to go for mass demonstrations or day-in, day-out, pickets, or to campaign for consumer boycotts. In Holland a different strategy was chosen by activists: namely, direct action. The campaign escalated and recently one activist was given five years; the actions continue. The authorities now reportedly fear a greater backlash, and not just in Holland.

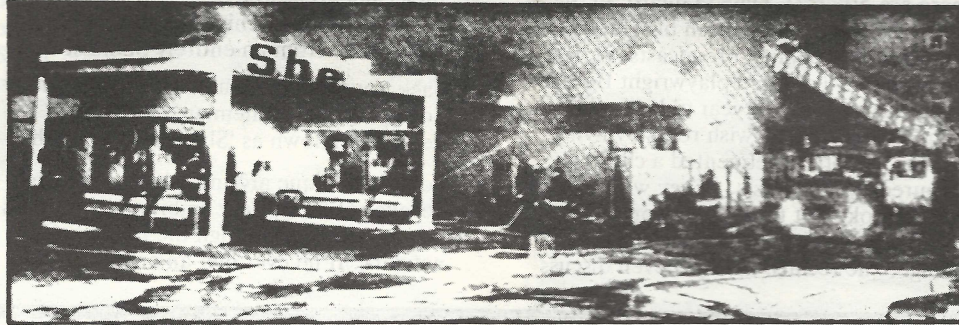
We examine below the direct action campaign in Holland, the bulk of this report courtesy of a correspondent in that country. In 1984 a group of militants raided the offices of the Dutch/South African Society in Amsterdam and threw half of its library in the canals. Spectacular actions in 1985 included the arson attack on the house of John Deuss, a big-time oil trader who helped South Africa to dodge the boycott, and the disruption of a South African promotion of a travel agency. Also, in August and September of that year a surge of actions occurred as a reaction to the state of emergency. Most of these were directed against companies with links to South Africa.

One spectacular action was carried out against a South African wine trader when activists dressed themselves up as fraud squad officers, with a false warrant, and raided the trader: they left with half of the paperwork without raising suspicion.

These actions were partly successful. Together with the pressure from the official anti-apartheid organisations, they forced a lot of small companies to withdraw from South Africa. Bigger and more important companies did not.

But there was one major success. As a result of a wellplanned fire-bomb attack, claimed by the, until then, unknown group Revolutionary Anti-Racist Action (RARA), a department store of the wholesale dealer MAKRO was completely burned down. Then, in May 1986, in one night alone 14 Shell filling stations across the country were sabotaged, with one being burned down. A month later 5 more Shell stations were similarly attacked. At the end of 1986 the RARA group hit again: a second department store of MAKRO was successfully fire-bombed. Four weeks later a third MAKRO store was hit. The total damage caused to MAKRO by these three attacks came to 20,000. The owner of MAKRO, the Dutch multinational SHV, finally decided to withdraw from South Africa.

After this victory RARA decided to concentrate on Shell. The next wave of Shell actions were smaller in number and carried out by a co-ordinated group of activists — this was mainly because of



increased police intelligence. The tendency to leave it all to just a few was not a good one, not least because the overall effect on Shell would be minimised. However the RARA attacks did act as an inspiration to others and eventually out of this emerged a national anti-Shell campaign.

For some years Shell had been the object of a boycott campaign by liberals and anti-apartheid campaigners in different countries. The violent actions against Shell were always condemned by these people, despite the previous success in forcing other companies to withdraw as a result of violent attacks.

The latest wave took off in March 1988. 36 Shell stations were attacked in one night alone. Petrol tubes were cut through, underground tanks were polluted with sugar and paint, etc. More attacks followed and over the last 6 months over 100 attacks have been recorded. There were also pickets and blockades of Shell petrol stations and mass leafletting. A group called Smash Apartheid broke into a shipping agency and stole their paperwork: they found that Shell was indeed the main South African coal trader and that part of the imported South African coal was reexported under false labels to smaller English ports (especially Hartlepool). All these transports were arranged by CORY COAL INTERNATIONAL (London) and TRANSCOR COAL (Redhill).

Needless to say the organisation behind the illegal actions is kept very secret, although this organisation tends to be of a coordinative nature with actions being carried out by small, independent, cells around the country. There have, however, been campaigns carried out, too, involving all groups acting concertedly on one day affairs. On the whole, though, the independent cell structure has proved to be quite successful with arrests taking place for minor offences only.

However this situation changed back in April when the police raided 8 squats in

Amsterdam and arrested 8 people. The police claimed to have caught the RARA group, but later they released 7 of those arrested. While in detention the 8 were subjected to intense interrogation, but they all refused to say anything. The one person the police did not release — Rene Roemersma — was detained on circumstantial evidence only. During his trial he kept silent on all matters except his support for RARA. He was found guilty and sentenced to 5 years, which is high for Dutch standards.

Since his imprisonment and conviction activists have continued to attack Shell and other apartheid businesses.

SHELL SABOTAGE

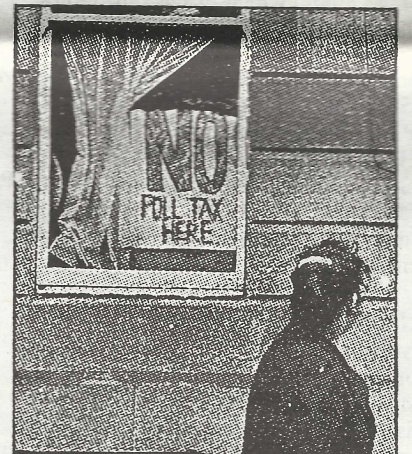
The following is taken from a handbook in Holland that describes the methods used by the anti-Shell activists.

1. THE HOSES. Use a hack saw. Watch out for petrol spray. The petrol nozzles can be taken away. Do not touch the LPG hoses as the escaping gas makes too much noise — also the gas is highly inflammable. Obviously do not have any naked flames.
2. PAYMENT SCREENS. These can be painted over or broken.
3. PETROL TANKS. If you can open the entrances to the outlets then sugar, paint or other materials can be tipped in. Padlocks over the outlets can be broken with bolt cutters.
4. THE SHOP. Usual stuff: paint jobs, glueing, graffiti, etc.
5. FIRE. Think a lot about this. Very dangerous for yourself plus others (eg petrol station workers, passers-by, etc.). Not recommended unless well planned and where there is a guarantee of no injury to anyone. Best to start with the shop. Never go for the petrol pumps or tanks or LPG themselves. Avoid petrol stations in urban areas or near houses at all costs. If in doubt don't even consider. (The above is reprinted for no other reason than to provide insight into how the saboteurs work.)

PRIVATISED POLL TAX REGISTRATION

Westminster Council has announced plans to sell off the job of registration for the Poll Tax. The council hopes to get a private sector company to organise the Poll Tax registration and to employ agents to go around houses getting the forms filled in. Likely candidates for taking over the job are security companies, market research firms, etc. Other councils could well copy Westminster council's plan as it provides a getout if faced with resistance.

The privatisation of organising the registration of the Poll Tax payers is just one of three tiers involving the selling off of Poll Tax and related services. The collection of the tax money is already open to tender, with bidders including the Post Office and British Telecom. Also the national identity files, to which the Poll Tax files will be linked, have been reorganised within the new Government Data Network, which will be maintained by Racal Electronics, the private defence contractor.



If the full privatisation campaign goes ahead it will mean that the whole Poll Tax project will be run by the private sector. From the Government's point of view this ties in quite logically with the privatisation of local services. The long-term plan is that in the future if you want to take up local services then you will either have to pay for them separately or via the Poll Tax: either way they won't come under local authority control. To emphasise this point Westminster Council are also planning to privatise a vast number of local services such as Housing, Leisure, Homelessness. Any local authority housing will be administered by a private company; libraries will be run on the same basis. Non-profit making aspects will be ditched or prices increased either through the Poll Tax levy or through premiums. Under the plan if you're homeless then you will be expected to go to a private company or charity for help. There will be no shortlife housing.

Westminster Council regards itself as the vanguard in the fight to get rid of municipal socialism, welfarism and public sector administration. The Government backs it all the way and hopes that other councils will follow the Westminster example. The end result will be a society where the vast majority of the public will be excluded from basic services because they won't be able to afford them.

The Poll Tax is central to this onslaught. If its implementation can be defeated, then correspondingly all these other plans will be affected too.

BRITAINS PRIVATE KGB

The Economic League has been having a rough time lately, with all the bad publicity. There were the three *World In Action* TV programmes, there were the exposes in the *Observer*, there were the reports in *Lobster* and *Black Flag*. While the latter two have relatively small coverage, the media has and does take account of what they say and uses their stories when the time is right. This happens more than some people think. Sometimes it works the other way around. A journalist can't get a story published, so it is 'leaked' to the other direction, to the

radical press, where it is taken up and then quoted, indirectly, by the journalist when the story has gained wider ground. It's 'surfacing' in reverse.

The Economic League has been pursuing for some time now a policy of 'going public' — not really, but it's more a defensive action as a result of recent attacks. This policy has backfired somewhat. Now it faces internal crises of its own. Journalists working for the mainstream press have been able to come up with some 'exclusives' on the League, but these have mainly ended up arguing

the point that the EL keeps inaccurate files, or its records are too extreme, or its blacklisting is too arbitrary. They seem to be suggesting that the League would be okay if its information was better

informed, or if it only concentrated on extremists and the ordinary trade unionists, Labour Party members and left-wing literati alone.

More recently, too, we have had a complaint from Patrick Harrington of the

Contd. on Page 5.



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**For a social system based on mutual
aid and voluntary co-operation -
against State control and all forms
of government and economic re-
pression. To establish a share in
the general prosperity for all - the
breaking down of racial, religious,
national and sex barriers - and to
fight for the life of one world.**

A marvellous response to our crisis appeal
which means *Black Flag* continues to come
out, albeit fortnightly no more. We have just
one printer's bill in hand part from our bank
drag. Right on!

ABC (London) Anon (various currency
banknotes) £30.01 i/h £68 : £98.01.

State of finance as at Sept 1:

Printing £951. 00
Postage £232. 00
Stationery £26. 00
=====

total spent £1209. 00

Subs/sales £405. 07

Donations * £868. 50

=====

total received £1273. 50

£64. 43 i/hand which brings our debtor
balance down to £4769.81.

Donations: Anon £500, £100, London AM
£75, JG £10, Deptford DAM £20, Norfolk
EP £6, Ledbury A. £5.50. Leamington
EH £1, Soton AF £14, Corby AP £50,
London 'In memory Larry Law' M & C P
£5, M'cr RB £30, Brighton AF £10,
Vancouver DW £8, Swansea J £4, Leeds
benefit £30.

EGG ON FACE DEPT: Sorry about
reverting to saying *Black Flag* was a
Fortnightly in our banner heading last
issue. We still are a monthly. Our major
crisis has been solved (maybe it went to
our make-up dept's head?) but not to the
extent we can go back to fortnightly
publication.

Sorry for the delay in bringing out this
issue (nothing to do with our crisis).
Owing to the postal strike we could not
send anything we published to anyone
outside London (except by unacceptable
methods) so we've waited till the strike
was over.
Overseas readers please note.

Anarcho-Quiz

1. In the Battle of the Boyne 300 years
ago, which side did the Tories support,
and where did the Catholics stand?
2. Which President of the United States
announced to the world he was a
doughnut?
3. When the anarchist activists Durruti
and Ascaso wanted to re-enter their native
Spain but avoid being arrested, what
disguise did they adopt?
4. What causes most fights at international
Nazi-Fascist reunions?
5. In which Ritz Hotel, in what capital city
have the largest number of anarchists died
in bed?
6. What practice of the pagan and
Moorish world was most loathed as a
sinful abomination by Christianity, but has
now become fully acceptable — even in
Catholic countries?

Answers on page 8

HOME NEWS

THE BRITISH ASS ON PSYCHOLOGY

Speaking at the Oxford conference of the
British Association, the medical director
of Broadmoor, Dr John Hamilton, now
seconded to the Dept. of Health, came up
with the newest psychological theory
developed by Swiss Dr Alice Miller. How
did the Holocaust happen? Only because
of "mass abuse of German children": they

were brought up to be "well behaved,
undemanding, self-controlled, grateful and
above all. meek" in the decades round he
turn of the century, so when Hitler came
along, he was a father figure who had to
be obeyed without question.

There is some truth here, in that the
accepted norms of unquestioning

obedience are harmful, but it reminds one
of the old liberal psychologists who said
that playing with soldiers or aggressive
sports like boxing cause wars. Wars and
dictatorships are not caused by
psychological aggressive impulses (unless
one regards the State as a person) but by
timidity, docileness or apathy on the part
of people, inculcated by mass propaganda
or other means of coercion.

The system of command-and-obey does
not need to be psychologically examined.
It needs to be destroyed.

HEAR THIS

Politically illiterate journalist (you mean
there are others?), David Gillard, in the
Radio Times of 3-9 Sept in his Hear This!
blurb for forthcoming broadcasts, writes:
'Back in the 40s, when playwright Bernard
Kops was a callow 18 year old escaping
from his East End Jewish roots by living
in Soho, he often frequented a club
favoured by anarchists. "They were
utterly broke but they had a wonderful
vision of what they'd do when things
change," he recalls. "They'd even discuss

the government posts they'd have when
they came to power."

Sound like anarchists? FACT: Bernard
Kops came from an entirely Stalinist

background. He ran a book barrow off
Soho, lived in 'Bohemian' circles, was
derisively known as 'Shakespeare' by the

bookthief clique around a local coffee bar
because of his literary ambitions. Later his
plays caught on through the familiar C.P.
network. If he ever met an anarchist, far

less one discussing posts if they got in
power (!), he wouldn't have been able to
recognise one.

As to his radio play *Kafe Kropotkin*
broadcast on 5th Sept, it exploits Kops'
familiar East End Jewish Stalinists under a
thin veneer of Anarchist phrases ("we
fought the commies in Spain" — "it was
the fascists who were the enemy"; "Emma
Goldman be with me"). On the day
following this piss-take the BBC broadcast
a play giving the conventional Tory view
of Anarchism: the pickled remains of
caricatured Resistance fighter Luccheni
inspire murder. What price BBC political
impartiality as it really is? One day Kops,
the next day robbers.

MURDER MOST FOUL

In a period during which we got a spare of
anti-anarchists radio and TV plays and things,
not just Kops's stalinists supposed to-be
anarchists so's he doesn't attack his old
comrades, there was a drama documentary of
Jack the Ripper. How could you drag
anarchists into that? Well, it seems you could:
in the middle of the action they showed *Direct
Action* and *Freedom* being printed. Talk about
guilt by association, this was being printed on
the same spot 100 years later.

Yet there is a connection with anarchism
they missed. The theory which still holds up
as the most plausible is that the random
Ripper was a decoy duck set up by the
Establishment to hide the killing of specific
people (because they knew of the Duke of
Clarence's marriage). This killing by stealth
is a hallmark of the British Establishment, a
despotism modified by fear of publicity.
During and after the First World War there
were many dozens, perhaps hundreds, of
solitary unexplained deaths—by
accident?—unreported and certainly
uncollated—of anarchists and revolutionary
socialists, particularly of those associated
with the armed forces. The Monocled
Mutineer touches on this briefly, but it is a

regular feature. Is it now going on? The
killing of Hilda Murrell, about which we
wrote in our last issue, is one such case which
suggests that it is now being pursued against
people of quite mild liberal views who happen
to know too much about nuclear policies and
cannot otherwise be silenced.

How many other such cases can only be
guessed at even if people knowing of such odd
deaths come forward. Certainly one such
case was that of the popular solicitor William
McRae.

He was no revolutionary but a Scottish
Nationalist—whom the Labourites dub Tartan
Tories but who are a lot more concerned
about local pollution than they—and three and
half years ago he went in a similar way to
Hilda Murrell, being concerned at the effects
of nuclear graveyards on Oban in the West
Highlands. He was found in his car dying of
head wounds on Good Friday, after taking
some files home with him to study (*Oban
Times* and *West Highland Times Weekender*)
and remarking to friends exultantly 'I've got
them!'

The police after some delay decided there
were no suspicious circumstances, which
suggests suicide. Yet the gun was thrown into

a stream 20 yards away and the briefcase was
missing. The authorities steadily refuse to act
any further.

This is a case where there is obvious proof.
Yet one knows of more peace campaigners
who have been on to something, through their
local government activity or otherwise—or
may have only thought they were and
indiscreetly said so—who have also been
victims perhaps of accidents or more skilfully
concealed murders.

Does this sound paranoid? When you
consider what comes after—in the case of
William McRae the building of Nirex on the
island of Oban—the secrecy involved—not
against foreign agents but local
opinion—clearly was reckoned worth a
murder by the State forces, as was the
protection of the Crown in the Ripper case or
the protection against revolution in the
post-WWI cases.

British Telecom will now offer a service to
all councils who feel unable to handle the
volume of data which will be required for
the Poll Tax. The Customer Service
System, which will be run on an IBM
mainframe at a new centre in Hemel
Hemsteadwill, for a fee, deal with the
production and distribution of bills,
reminders and the collecting of non-cash
payments. They will also handle all the
record keeping.

In forming syndicalist unions, as the
first step would have to be the creation of
local bases, or clubs, trades halls or



whatever you call them, from which
industrial sectors would arise, there is no
way they can now of themselves divide, as
do the formation of political parties,
vanguards or rival trade unions; how
could say a home base of strike support
groups do so? It is true, though, that
being revolutionary must mean a degree
of isolation during a period of repression.

STATE MURDERER SAYS GOODBYE

Early in July this year Spanish president Felipe Gonzales quietly reshuffled his Cabinet, which gave him the opportunity to get rid of Jose Barrionuevo, his Interior Minister for the last six years — a man whose methods of running Spain's numerous security forces (most of them unchanged since Franco's time) resulted in the direct murder of twenty five people, the torture of hundreds more, and a string of grievances across the peninsular, with calls for his resignation reaching fever pitch in the last few months as more and more of his dirty work has come to light.

Barrionuevo — an ex-Carlist who was a member of the Falange in 1968 — has been involved directly in three major scandals. First, was the death by gassing of a worker in Reinos, the Cantabrian town which went out on to the streets to resist the reconversion of local industry and which was occupied, military-style, by Guardia Civil forces which threatened local women with rape, made local workers run a gauntlet of club blows, caused as yet unrefunded damage to shops, flats and houses in the area, and used a type of tear gas prohibited under European regulations. Barrionuevo was held responsible: he refused to reveal details about the type of gas used and took the opportunity to defend the 'courage' of the Guardia Civil involved.

Second, was the El Nani scandal. El Nani — whose real name was Santiago Corella — was a small-time smash and grabber who got involved in a series of jewel raids organised by local mafia in

northern Spain around Santander and who had been infiltrated by cops, some of whom were corrupt. Corella's sister reported that El Nani was missing in late 1985 and later charged the police with his murder. The El Nani case has since been given coverage on Spanish television for the last six months, revealing that Corella's sisters were tortured, sexually molested and given death threats by police after she had reported him missing. The torture and near murder of a friend of Corella's also came to light, along with the fact that the anti-terrorist laws — applied to Corella — are generally applied to common criminals under direct orders from Barrionuevo. Barrionuevo himself denied the use of torture by Spanish police at the time that photos of Corella's companion — whose torso was stitched up from the neck to the groin — were circulating in the press. Recently a macabre search for Corella's body has been carried out at various reservoirs and the cops who murdered him have been found guilty and sentenced to a total of 145 years between the three of them.

Third, is the GAL scandal. The GAL (Anti-terrorist Liberation Groups) were a far-right terrorist organisation specialising in armed attacks on Basque refugees in France. Although made up of Portuguese (ex-Aginter Press), Italian (ex-Paladin with delve Cheat connections), North African and French (ex-OAS) fascists, the GAL were organised by two Spanish policemen, Jose Amedo and Michel Dominguez, who met up with ultra-rightist Mario Correa de Cunha in a Lisbon hotel in January '86. Amedo and Dominguez then travelled — still on 'official business for the Ministry of Interior', according to testimony — with gunmen selected by Cunha to the Basque border at Irun. Two machine-gun attacks on Basque bars were then carried out. Barrionuevo, when asked a series of direct questions about the funding given to Amedo and Dominguez, refused to answer, claiming the Spanish equivalent of the Official Secret Act as his excuse. But proof of GAL's funding has turned up anyway, in the form of a mysterious bank account in Amedo's name in which large sums of money were deposited tax-free without explanation.

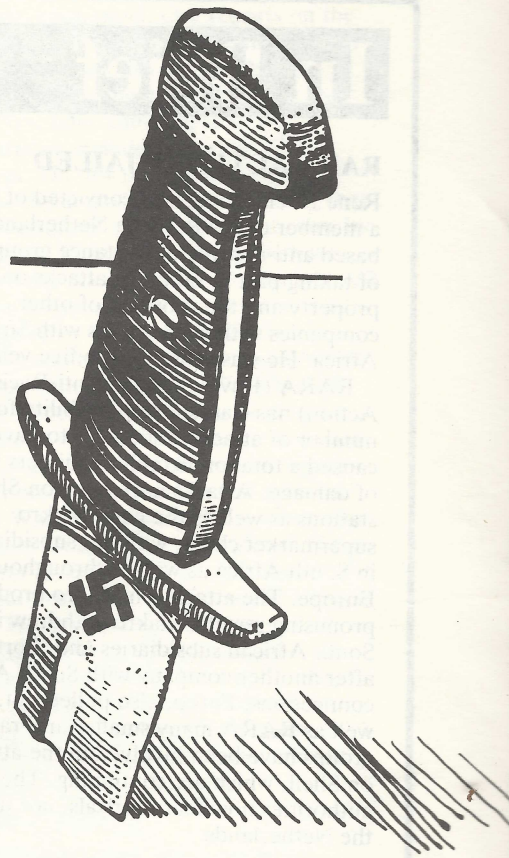
In all twenty three people were killed in GAL actions, three of which were indiscriminate machine-gunnings of bars frequented by local villagers in French Euskadi. In other words the Spanish government was organising armed terrorist groups to make attacks on civilian targets — attacks which involved direct contacts between the Ministry of the Interior (and Barrionuevo) and the international fascist movement. Gonzalez' reply to all this has been to urge a 'legal reform' to prevent precisely this kind of information from coming to light. Gonzalez has hinted suggestively that these reforms will be line with German, French and English norms (when asked directly he refused to describe these norms in any detail) and added that his duty was to 'prevent the State from getting lax' and that 'society — eg. Spanish society — did not treat its political leaders with any respect.'

The GAL, by the way, was not used exclusively against ETA or suspected members of ETA. It has been used against the GRAPO (maoists) as well as the anarchist Mario Innes Torres, who fled to Finland after a series of GAL death threats. Torres, who was extradited back to Spain, has now been released on bail pending trial. The charge against Torres — belonging to an armed group — is based on slight evidence connected with Torres' anti-Francoist activities. Torres was first arrested in Spain in 1984, released on bail, and then attacked by four armed men — GAL members. He escaped, fled to France, where he was interrogated by the French political police (Renseignements Generaux) who accused him of belonging to Action Directe. Following the interrogation and numerous death threats over the phone Torres went to Finland where he asked for political

asylum and where he got support from Finnish anarchists, who are now formed in the Finnish section of the Black Cross. The Finnish authorities, however, turned down his request for asylum and arrested him pending extradition.

N.B. Latest news is that three police officers sent to trial on the El Nani case have been given virtual life imprisonment. In Spain the newspapers devoted several pages each to the sentencing. The three officers sentenced are Detective Chief Superintendent Francisco Javier Fernandez Alvarez (head of the Madrid murder squad), Detective Inspector Victoriano Gutierrez Lobo and Detective Inspector Francisco Aguilar Gonzalez.

It is clear from the evidence given that many other officers have escaped prosecution. It may well be that the three officers sentenced will try to appeal for much lower sentences in exchange for incriminating information against former colleagues. Certainly it is the case that most people in Spain are highly sceptical that the three will remain imprisoned.



CONSCRIPTS REVOLT

The controversial laws over military objectors took a new twist in Spain. The government has already conceded that objectors, under certain circumstances, can opt out and do 'community service'; now the government is requiring objectors to enter public service employment, such as the state-run railways. The trouble is that objectors conscripted in to the public services will be on conscript pay and having none of the job conditions that have been negotiated by the unions for the regular public service employees. Needless to say the unions are up in arms over this.

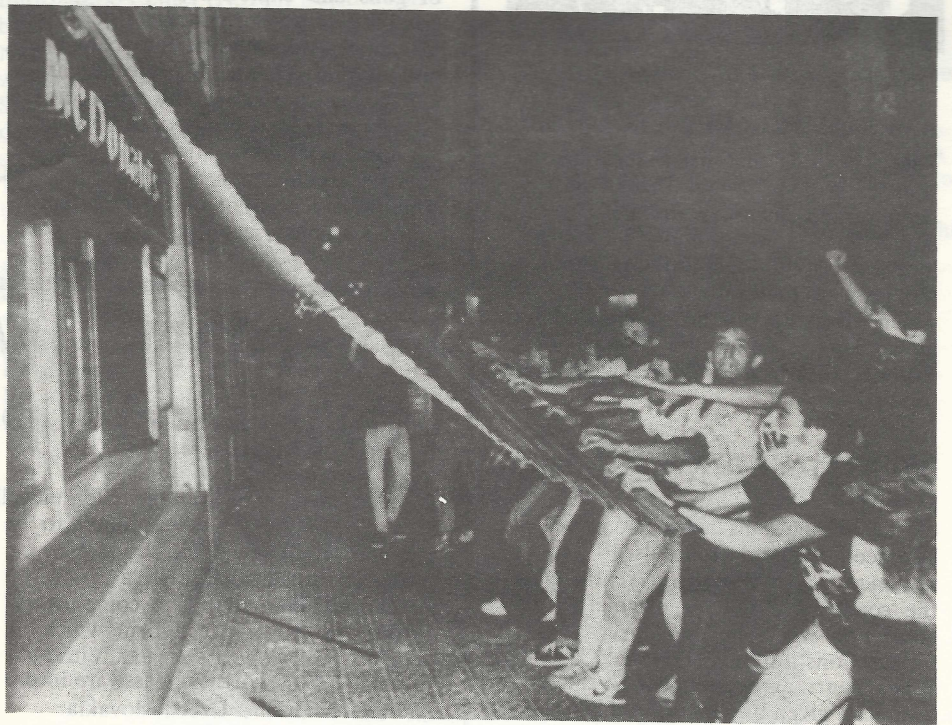
The state-run railways, RENFE, has collaborated with the scheme and as such the unions are gearing up for a strike

campaign. Recently, in Barcelona, a RENFE administration office came under attack during a major disturbance on Catalonia Day. The disturbances involved several demonstrations and several thousand people made use of the occasion by attacking the RENFE office, molotoving a government tax office, smashing up banks, burger restaurants (including McDonalds), etc. The police discreetly 'allowed' the crowds to attack their targets as such disturbances are traditional on that day. It would have been difficult, anyway, for the cops to attack as the centre of Barcelona was filled with tourists and any overreaction would have been counterproductive especially with 1992 and the Olympics coming up.

UNSEATING THE COMMITTEES

In our last issue we referred to the success of the phoney CNT in taking the workers' committee at the SEAT factory. What we didn't emphasise enough was that the real CNT, the CNTAIT, played a part in unseating the original committee. The fact that the workers decided to rid themselves of the committee is seen by the CNT-AIT as an important precedent. The CNT-AIT now hope to organise similar referenda around the country in other workplaces to get rid of the dreaded corporate works committees that were originally devised by Franco. It was perhaps the 'shock' of workers deciding to do away with these committees that has caused the greatest furore. The entry of the phoney CNT (or Renovados) into the story by their standing for a new committee and getting most of the seats is neither here nor there.

The SEAT committee now consists of 17 phoney CNT delegates, 15 CCOO (Communists) delegates and 16 UGT (Socialists) delegates. Seen in this way the UGT and the CCOO can easily outvote the phoney CNT. They will, therefore, be forced to either collaborate with the Socialists and Communists (as they have been doing so, to a certain extent, already) or they will have to become a minority opposition should the UGT and the CCOO gang up together. This makes the phoney CNT's so-called victory a farce. It is not without amusement one notes that the anti-anarchist Freedom for once breaks its total silence on industrial matters with a whole page on the great electoral success of the Phoney winning a maximum of seats in one 'workers' council'.



McDonalds under attack in the heart of Barcelona

A GAP IN THE CURTAIN

In Moscow, on the anniversary of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, around 500 gathered in an illegal demonstration. There were 30 arrests as members of a special new hooligan force organised by the Ministry of Internal Affairs waded in to beat up the demonstrators. The demonstrators shouted that the Ministry gang were fascists.

In Czechoslovakia itself several thousand gathered in the largest anti-regime demonstration since 1969. They were calls for freedom and for

troops out of Czechoslovakia. The demonstrators shouted at the riot police. 'We have the truth, you have the dogs'. The riot police then charged with their dogs, letting off tear gas and beating up the demonstrators.

Unfortunately many of the demonstrators were eulogising Gorbachev, taken in by his Glasnost PR campaign. But there is a strong and growing grassroots movement to fight for change, which ultimately must defeat the totalitarian model and return to the freedom of soviets without centralisation or oppression.

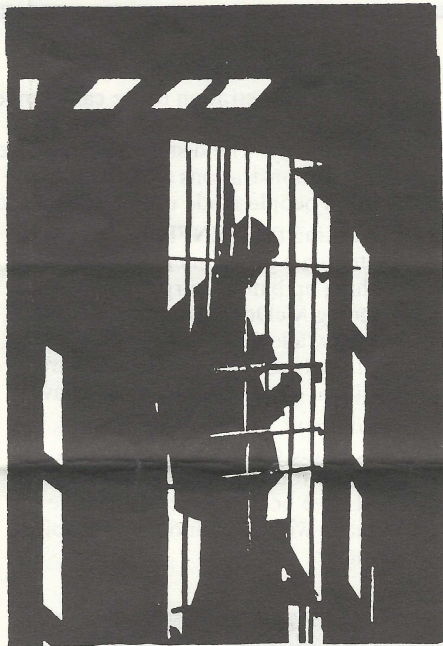
ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS

In Brief

RARA ACTIVIST JAILED

Rene Roemersma, was convicted of being a member of RARA (the Netherlands based anti-apartheid resistance group) and of taking part in sabotage attacks on Shell property and the property of other companies with connections with South Africa. He was sentenced to five years.

RARA (Revolutionary Anti-Racist Action) has claimed responsibility for a number of attacks, estimated to have caused a total of 38 million guilders worth of damage. Attacks have been on Shell stations as well as the giant Makro supermarket chain, with has subsidiaries in South Africa as well as throughout Europe. The attacks on Makro produced promising results: Makro withdrew its South African subsidiaries and shortly after another company with South African connections, Forbo, also pulled out. As well as RARA many smaller anti-racist groups have been involved in the attacks on Shell, which are continuing. The authorities now fear reprisals, not just in the Netherlands.



AVI NAFTEL UPDATE

Latest news is that his request for transfer to a prison in Britain has been turned down by the US authorities. However there is still a loophole as this decision was based on the laws of the state of Arizona, which allegedly can be superseded by an agreement under the Council of Europe, to which Avi intends to refer.

BELATED JUSTICE

Manuel Fernandez Asensio, a member of the autonomous anarchist group, has been released from his 10 year sentence, after serving 6 years, with the court admitting his original conviction was false.

The Constitutional Tribunal, Spain's appeal court, agreed that the so-called testimony given by Manuel and his fellow defendants was not 'ratified' in court - in other words his 'verbals' were forced confessions. Certainly a victory that he has been released, but it took the Spanish authorities 6 years to admit false imprisonment.

At the original trial, seven other comrades were sentenced with Manuel to a total of 90 years. The charges related to a number of robberies: On a post office, a Carrefour supermarket, as well as banks.

One member of the original group has already been released having chosen to associate his actions with the nationalist group 'Terra Lliure'. The Catalan cause seems to attract mercy never given to anarchist prisoners. There are still two members of the original group inside: *Guillermo Marin Gaitan* and *Sorter del Campo Baz*.

IMPRISON THE OLD

There has been a strange death. An old man by the name of Mr Cross. Some time ago last year he was discharged to an old peoples' home, somewhere in Cornwall. The Home could not cope with him because he was very cranky. So for no reason he was sent back to prison. This in itself was unlawful. Because no one wanted him he was sent back to prison. This was a very ill man. He had to have oxygen all the time as his lungs were bad. Without oxygen he could not live. Two weeks ago they took away his oxygen bottle.

Every single day he told them he would die without it. Now comes the strange part of his death. They never lifted a finger to help him on the day of his death. They cleaned him up. I was on the cell speaking to him. I was the last prisoner to speak to him. He was taken in a wheel chair into the room on the landing. No one ever saw him again. We all know he died in that room. When we asked we were told he was rushed to hospital and died in hospital. They killed him. Whoever gave the order to remove his bottle of oxygen that he had been on for ten years removed it to kill him off. All I asked was what time did he

die. The screws came down on me like a ton of bricks, telling prisoners not to talk to me. One morning I was standing on the landing speaking to a prisoner when a hospital officer told me to stop talking; all the other prisoners were talking to each other. When I refused to stop talking he locked me up. This is just pure harassment. They are trying to force me into losing my temper. This I won't do...they refused to hand me my mail...they gave me chips that were rock hard and one day old tea...

If they can remove an oxygen bottle from a man who couldn't do without it, it's cold bloody, out-right, murder. What would they do to me?!!

Martin Foran (30 July 1988)

I want to make it quite clear I would NEVER, EVER take my own life. I live so one day I can return to my wife and children...I'm frightened.

Martin Foran (31 July 1988)

The story told by Martin has been corroborated by other prisoners who have smuggled out letters to Black Flag. These letters also confirmed the victimisation Martin is getting. One prison writes: 'I'm asking you as a friend of Martin to let your readers

know what happened and try and save this man's life - if they can cover up an inmate's death they can do anything and get away with it. Martin Foran may die of 'natural causes' in the near future if nothing is done. PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE HELP.'

Another imprisoned comrade of Martin's wrote that a screw, a certain Mr Stacking, is one of the main instigators harassing Martin; he also names a Mr Berryman who forced him (Martin's comrade) to take drugs. He goes on to write 'I am not writing as a young tearaway. I am a man aged 72 who was snatched from his meal table in 1982 on the lame excuse that I might reoffend. The secret court posing as the Parole Board decided to keep me in prison. I would not appear or be represented. How can the UK run down other countries for snatching men from their meal tables and throwing them into prison then trying them by a secret court when the UK lead the field in that respect?'

Martin also adds in another letter that a prisoner, a man named Jackson (B80815) in Parkhurst was badly burned when another prisoner chucked boiling soup over him. This prisoner came to Martin for help when the authorities refused to allow him access to a solicitor. Martin managed to get word to the prisoner's family, who then got in touch with a solicitor.

ATHENS CALLING

Klearchos Smyrneos, Christoforos Marinos, Gerasimos Boukouvalas and Evaghelia Voyatzi (whose story has already been reported in a previous issue of Black Flag) are still in prison. All are in Korydallos Prison, with Evaghelia in the women's wing. Her six-year old boy is imprisoned with her. The latest news is that Klearchos and Christoforos are accused of forming an armed band, of possession of guns and explosives, of the bombing of state buildings (the Inland Revenue) and some private companies, and of theft (taking a prefect's car and trying to remove the car radio). Evaghelia is also accused of forging documents. But the most serious charges are levied against Christoforos who is also accused of attempted murder against seven cops.

The three male prisoners can be contacted at: Dikastiki Fylaki Korydallou, Korydallos, Piraeus, Greece. Evaghelia can be contacted at: Gynaikeies Fylakes Korydallou, Korydallos, Piraeus, Greece. Other news is that thirteen comrades are facing trial in connection with their participation in an anti-nuclear demonstration held in May. One of them, Yanis Balis, is accused of attempted murder: the Police claim that they possess a videotape showing Balis throwing a molotov against a police patrol car.

Thirty-seven other comrades are awaiting trial on charges connected to the occupation of the Chemistry School building of Athens University in May 1985 in protest at the murder of Mihalios Kaltezas, a 15 year old

comrade, by Athanasios Melisas, a cop, who is still working for the Police.

A prosecution has also begun against Basil Karapalis (our ABC contact in Greece). The Attorney-General is accusing him of disobeying Police orders, namely that Basil organised an Omori demonstration in May (on the



Omori International Day) despite a banning order.

SOURCE: BK (Anarchist Proposal/Anarchist Black Cross),

LONDON IMPORTERS LINK TO PRISON LABOUR

An import company in the Clerkenwell area of London has been found to be the main UK agent for products produced under torture in a Czechoslovakian jail. The company is Vitrea, an Anglo-Czech firm which handles glassware. Last year Vitrea imported £8m worth of glassware into the UK from the Czechoslovakia.

The prison in question is Valdice, notorious for its hard regime. Many of the prisoners incarcerated there are political. The production line for the glassware is strict to say the least.

Those prisoners who slack face beatings, a change in diet, solitary confinement or an increase in sentence.

There are several Charter 77 activists in Valdice. One such activist got four years for publishing, amongst other items, a Czech version of Orwell's 'Animal Farm'. Another Charter 77 activist got six years for trying to publicise the Valdice export scandal and was then put in Valdice himself on the production line. Those prisoners who refuse to work are beaten and it

is suspected that one dissident was murdered while in Valdice for taking such a stance.

Prisoners in Valdice are expected to pay for their own imprisonment, as in some jails in the USA. 70% of the nominal pay the prisoners receive for the work they do on the production line is deducted for 'living expenses'. If their 'living expenses' are not met due to a short-fall in production then they are made to pay their 'debts' to the prison on release. Some prisoners at Valdice are only entitled to one hour visiting time a year. Health and Safety at Valdice is predictably bad. Many prisoners suffer from eczema because of the dust from the grinders used for cutting the glass. Needless to say there is no compensation.

ENTER THE EURO POLICE

The French and West German governments want a single European police force with the 1992 liberalisation of the European market. There is much opposition to this, however, from other governments and from police federations generally. The police want to see better co-operation but not the creation of a

single Euro-wide force. The West German and French governments are also pushing for the standardisation of identity cards, which are common in mainland Europe, but are only being introduced in a limited way in Britain. They argue that with the relaxation of national boundaries in 1992 identity cards are essential for all EEC

countries.

Already passports in Europe are being standardised and recently a new computer-readable passport was issued in Britain to replace the old one.

Meanwhile the Euro police federations are looking at different options for improving co-operation. On the cards are a reorganisation of Interpol, the creation of a Eurowide computer network for combating crime, and the setting up of a new force with special powers throughout Europe.

BRITAINS KGB CONTD.

National Front. He protests that the NF are opposed to blacklisting. This is a joke, of course. They only protest because the League blacklists them too. In a fascist state they would be the first to make use of any blacklisting files. (Harrington, incidentally, also contested our reference to the NF being funded by one or two major building companies: Harrington, being relatively new, forgets that NF papers regularly included paid advertisements from certain well known building firms). The crisis of the Economic League today is that it wants to expand but doesn't know how. The recession has had its effect on them too. In 1992 the League hopes to make use of the changes within the EC to move into other countries. But 1992 will also mean that the League will face rivals anxious to move into the blacklisting business. In this country this will certainly come from the private investigation companies, who already work with the police and MI5. It will only take a Goldsmith or two to set things going. Private companies — especially the larger ones — will be looking at new ways to blacklist, particularly now that the EL is getting bad publicity. Most major companies have their own vetting services anyway. Perhaps the more well known are British Telecom and the Post Office. Other companies have more limited vetting facilities or use the EL or private detectives or both. Any shake up in the EL will therefore leave a 'market gap' that POID (Post Office Investigation Department) or/and Section D of BT may wish to fill, given their already established relationship with the state intelligence services, sanctioned by parliament.

TURNING THE TABLES

This is not a situation to moan about. Action is needed. And not just short term either. The trade unions have done little to counteract the work of the EL, although the Labour Research Bureau has a wealth of information at its disposal.

The trouble is that not all the unions, and certainly not all trade unionists, can be relied on to take any effective measures simply because they rely on the blacklisting services of the League themselves.

Against Democracy (referred to as AD from now on) points out that Eric Hammond, leader of the breakaway electricians union, and Bill Jordan, right-wing leader of the engineers union, worked in their youth for companies using the EL's training schemes (which acted as brainwashing units for the shopfloor). We have already pointed out on a previous occasion the role of former steel workers union head, Bill Sirs, in the blacklisting business (when he was a director of IRIS). These are probably only the tip of the iceberg. Any counter-measures will need to take account of these rogues.

AD points out, too, that the League has been working for some time with certain professional recruitment organisations, in particular Marlar International and Management Search (who are both represented on EL's Central Council). There may well be other recruitment agencies that utilise the League's services on an ongoing basis. AD adds that a number of private security companies and private detective agencies subscribe to the League, with Hogg Robinson (which set up Control Risks) on the Central Council. The League in turn must rely on small time operatives to supply information; at the same time many firms use the Leagues facilities via private investigators so as to retain anonymity.

EL AND THE RIGHT

As we ourselves mentioned previously, the EL were partly behind the Campaign for a Free Britain (CFB) which organised a number of anti-Labour advertisements prior to the last general election. AD states that a certain Russell Walters was employed by the League to work for the CFB; later he unsuccessfully stood for election for Vice-president of the Young Conservatives.

The links between the League and the British establishment go back to its origins. The League can be traced back to three figures: Admiral Reginald Hall, who was Director of Military Intelligence at the Admiralty, Vernon Kell, head of MI5, and Basil Thompson, head of Special Branch. Within the Cabinet there was talk of the need for an organisation that could cope with 'the Bolsheviks, Syndicalists and German spy.' Thompson and Hall looked for private funding. From this emerged the Economic League. AD points out that by 1924 the League was already engaged in a major dirty tricks campaign: namely the infamous Zinoviev Letter, which was designed to bring about the fall of the Labour Government. AD asserts that Admiral Hall was one of those behind the forged letter. The result was that the Tories won the next election and the Liberals were decimated.

Then there is the fascist connection. Again this can be traced very early on in the League's history. We have already quoted previously the links between EL and the Anglo-German Friendship Union (which was a cover for nazi sympathisers as well as British intelligence agents). AD refers to Patrick Hannon who was president of the Birmingham branch of the British Fascists for 1925/6; he was also director of the Economic Study Club, which was the earlier name for the EL.

Then there were the connections between the League and the privately sponsored contingency services (euphemism for strike breaking organisations) set up during the General Strike. The League's first director was John Baker White. According to AD, before and during the General Strike he worked under George McGill, the founder of the OMS (Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies) and a close friend of Vernon Kell of MI5. The links between the League and the Police have always been in dispute (by them). Recent TV programmes have dispelled that myth and AD also points to a quote by Major Robert Hoare, a senior League official in the 1930's. Hoare admitted that he worked closely with the police, who allowed him to scrutinise their Communist Industrial File. The League maintained that the quote, from a letter, was disinformation, but in retrospect it was most likely not.

SUBVERSION

The League maintains that it combats subversion, but in reality has over the years been one of the greatest organisers of subversion, employed in dirty tricks and even coup plots. Our reports on the League's involvement in the anti-Wilson campaigns bear this out. Sir Martin Furnival Jones, the head of MI5 in the early 70's, later admitted that the conspirators included a certain Major General. On this point AD points to a League document in 1968 suggesting that the government should be overthrown by the Armed Forces (the EL at the time claimed the document was a forgery). AD goes on to point out that the document was signed by Major General Thomas Brodie, who happens to be a member of the EL's Central Council. Whether this Major General is the Major General referred to by Furnival-Jones is anyone's guess, but it's worth further investigation.

We noted, too, with interest that the Slater Walker company (later taken over by James Goldsmith — see 'Zeus's Other Backers') was in 1975 the 4th largest financial backer of the Economic League. Peter Walker arranged the infamous meetings between Goldsmith (the 'businessman') and Peter Wright, Heath and Rothschild to discuss means of helping the Tories win the '74 election. Goldsmith admits to this in his official biography.

WHAT NEXT?

AD presents a fine, well researched account of the Economic League. It contains much exclusive information both from primary and secondary sources. It surpasses anything previously done on the League.

The next step for those involved in anti-League research is to do something about it. This will need wide cooperation. There is a lot of useful information floating around which, if coordinated, can be built up into a sizeable database. The League can be tackled on different levels, not least on the propaganda front. But we now need to confront them on a different level. This cannot be far off.

Against Democracy — The True Story Of The Economic League: 1919—Present Day. By Spig. A 1 in 12 Publication, £3.99 Available from DIS, Box 60, 52 Call Lane, Leeds LS12 6DT.

ZEUS OTHER BACKERS

In our last issue we revealed how Zeus, the plausible denial security company that undertook dirty tricks on behalf of MI5, was financed. We named several companies that had shares in Zeus and showed how those companies were all linked, directly or indirectly, to Sir James Goldsmith, the media magnate and international retailer. One of the companies — Argyle Securities — that invested in Zeus deserves closer scrutiny.

Argyle Securities was originally taken over by Goldsmith in conjunction with Slater-Walker before the infamous Slater-Walker crash. Slater-Walker was of course headed by Jim Slater, who later faced major fraud charges, and Peter Walker, who later became Energy Secretary during the 1984/5 Miners Strike and who is currently serving as Secretary at the Welsh Office.

Walker and Goldsmith go back a long way together. In early 1974 Walker and Slater arranged a series of meetings between Goldsmith and Edward Heath, who was at that point facing a general election and was eager to recruit outside help to win the Tories another term of office. At one of these meetings, according to Goldsmith's official biographer, Heath and William Whitelaw asked Goldsmith if he would help in the campaign. Goldsmith later agreed to organise fund-raising (he had already personally contributed at least 100,000 to the Conservative Party out of his own pocket after being approached by Jeffrey Archer). There was also a hint from Heath that should the Tories win then Goldsmith and other businessmen would be brought into government to serve on the Cabinet.

Around this time, too, Goldsmith helped launch the controversial Centre for

Policy Studies, headed by Keith Joseph. Goldsmith provided most of the finances. The CPS was to become a springboard for the promotion of Thatcher and the Tory rightwing.

With the collapse of Slater-Walker the government of the day (then headed by Wilson), with the backing of the Bank of England, asked Goldsmith to take-over the situation. One person Goldsmith included on the new Slater-Walker board was Victor Rothschild, a senior figure in MI6 and a close confidant of Peter Wright, the author of 'Spycatcher'. Rothschild introduced Goldsmith to Wright and it was at a meeting between the three of them that further plans had been discussed at how Wilson and the Labour Party could be undermined. Goldsmith, it should be pointed out, was related to the Rothschilds. Like the Rothschilds the Goldsmiths (who were formerly known as Goldschmidt) were bankers and financiers going back some two hundred years. The Goldschmidt worked alongside the Rothschilds and in 1848 their families came together when Maximilian Goldschmidt married the daughter of Baron Willy Rothschild. Sir James Goldsmith consolidated the connection between the two families when he was invited on to the Board of the Rothschild Bank in France in 1975. Goldsmith's godfather, incidentally, was Baron James de Rothschild.

The von Marx side to the Goldsmith dynasty came about when James' aunt, Nellie Goldsmith, married Ernst von Marx, a German civil servant. Antonio and Anina von Marx, it will be remembered, were shareholders in Zeus, with Antonio also holding a directorship.

Despite denials to the contrary James Goldsmith has always maintained a high profile on the extreme right. In 1984, for

example, he was a guest speaker at a forum organised by the National Security Information Center (NSIC), which is run by CIA and former CIA personnel. The NSIC is, incidentally, run by Dr Roy Godson who was involved for some time with Stephen Haseler in organising a social democratic tendency in Britain in order to split the Labour Party (see *Black Flag* 183). In 1985 Goldsmith also addressed the Centre for Policy Studies in Blackpool on the entrepreneurial spirit. He has always been a keen advocate of free market economics and has despised old-fashioned 'high Toryism'.

In some respects, though, Goldsmith's involvement with Zeus is confusing. He has always maintained he was against nuclear energy and pollution and indeed

he helped launch the Ecological Foundation as well as helping to finance the Friends of the Earth in their anti-Windscale activities. But Zeus was not specifically an organisation against nuclear protesters. It was an organisation that primarily was concerned with detection and investigation, with the government agencies. Goldsmith had on many an occasion employed detectives to spy on competitors and he had connections with the secret services via his cousin, Victor Rothschild. It was quite logical for him, therefore, to enter into the security business. He was not, of course, directly involved — only in financing the firm. In that way he could claim deniability.



Sir James Goldsmith

the burston school strike

This month sees a commemoration of the longest strike on record. It lasted from 1914 to 1939. The strike took place because two people were dismissed from work and as a result a whole community came out in support. It was 25 years later, with the outbreak of World War II that the matter finally came to an end, but not without a campaign that brought support from trade unionists and libertarians all round the world. Where did this strike take place? In the unlikely setting on a tiny rural community in Norfolk, England. And who went on strike? Virtually the entire population of a school. The demand was for rural democracy, for liberty and for a working class community to run its own affairs. The whole affair began when two teachers, Kitty and Tom Higdon, came to the village of Burston, near Diss, to take over the running of the village school. Both had previously been employed at another rural school at Wood Dalling where they had encountered stiff opposition by the local gentry and the school governors. Kitty and Tom had merely asked for improvements to the condition of the school. Tom Higdon also helped to organise the local farm labourers to fight for higher pay and had encouraged them to get elected on to the parish council. The two teachers (Tom being the assistant to Kitty) were well liked by the children at the school: they treated them like they were their own, nursing them when they were sick, providing food when they were hungry. They even helped local villagers who were imprisoned for stealing food. But all to no avail: the school governors saw them as a threat to the local established order; their progressive ideas would lead the children to question authority. And so — and with little help from the fledgling teachers' union, the NUT — the Higdons were forced to leave. Reluctantly they decided to take up similar posts at another rural school, at Burston.

When they arrived at Burston Tom was surprised to see there was no branch of the Rural Labourers Union; farm workers were on lower wages than other parts of the country and, as in Wood Dalling, the parish council was run by the gentry and in particular the village parson. The school premises were a shambles: they were ill lit, ill drained and badly heated. The Higdons, despite their experience at their last school, decided to do something about this sorry state of affairs. They started to organise improvements to make life more comfortable in the school for the children, but this, as in Wood Dalling, brought about the opposition of the school governors, who saw these improvements as a waste of resources. The pastor in particular took a great dislike to the Higdons, whom he saw as troublemakers. The rest of the governors, and the local gentry, were anxious to rid themselves of Tom and Kitty not least because Tom, as he had done before, got involved in advising the local farm labourers on their rights and in encouraging them to unionise. Also many of the schoolkids were press-ganged by the farm owners into doing labouring instead of going to school. Tom put a stop to this and in one incident, during an argument between himself and a land owner over a child labourer, he hit the land owner. The children took to the Higdons and a close bond formed between them.

Before long Tom Higdon put the idea to the local people that they could kick the landowners, the pastor and the other gentry off the council, and get elected instead. So a group of them arranged to get nominated and they also nominated Tom. At the next council election it was a landslide. The Rural labourers and Tom got on to

the council and all, bar one, of the gentry were thrown off. The local press referred to it as a 'revolution' and almost immediately the gentry were conspiring to get their own back and in particular to get rid of the Higdons, who were openly preaching socialism. The village parson took charge of the campaign against the



Kitty and Tom Higdon

Higdons. Several allegations were concocted. They were accused of various improprieties, including misuse of school resources (eg heating the school) and uncivility to the governors (ie they didn't treat them as superiors). An enquiry was held. The Higdons asked the NUT for help, and this was given begrudgingly. But the enquiry was fixed from the start: the Higdon's own witnesses were not even called and the NUT representative sought only a compromise. In the end the enquiry recommended their dismissal, which was to take effect immediately on April 1st (1914).

The schoolteachers had hardly any time to say goodbye to the villagers and to the children. They had the opportunity for one more day's teaching and just enough time to pack their bags. On the morning of April 1st they walked out of the school building with their luggage. A policeman stood by and a temporary replacement for Kitty Higdon stood with him. Then suddenly in the distance, music was heard. Tom and Kitty looked up, as did the policeman, to see what it was. It sounded like a band playing. It was, and playing the music were the schoolchildren. They were marching through the village. In their hands were banners and placards. They were waving flags and singing. They were on strike!

In fact, unknown to the Higdons the schoolchildren had met secretly the previous day. They had left messages for one another. Violet Potter, one of the children, told them that a strike should be called. They agreed and later told their parents, who agreed to support them. And that night they prepared for the demonstration, little realising that they were to embark on a strike that would turn out to be longest in world history.

LOCAL SUPPORT

Tom Higdon was the son of a farm labourer and Kitty was the daughter of a shipwright. They were both socialists. They were also for freedom to abstain from the established church. Tom was a great believer in trade unionism, but had more of his own share of battles with the blossoming trade union bureaucracies; he believed in workers' direct action instead. Both Kitty and Tom didn't believe their work as

educationalists ended at with the close of lessons. Outside school hours they organised rambles for the children and other 'extra-curricular' activities. Highly unusual for that time they also organised Esperanto classes, being great believers in internationalism, as well as organising photography classes. They were progressives, who wanted

while the summer lasted, the school would continue to take place on the village green. And that is exactly what happened. The official village school teacher opened the official school, with her handful of pupils getting less and less. And the strike school opened each day on the green under a tent.

With winter the decision was made to move the school into the local carpenter's shop. And the following summer the mass meetings, rallies and festivals were resumed on the green. Many trade unionists and socialists came to these rallies. Tom Mann, the famous syndicalist leader, spoke at one of them. Also Sylvia Pankhurst. Burston was becoming increasingly famous as a centre for socialism and free education. Then, on November 10, 1915, the NUR and the Agricultural Labourers Union held a joint rally there in support of the strike school, helping on fund-raising.

But life wasn't going all that smoothly for the good people of Burston. The parents faced prosecution for not sending their children to the official school. The local court fixed fines on the parents for non-attendance. They were told that fines would have to be paid for each child and for each and every day school was missed. Non-payment of fines, they were told, would lead to imprisonment. But the local people organised. They knew that individually they could not pay the steep fines, nor afford time in prison. So they decided to set up a local fund to pay the fines. Within two weeks the court had imposed over 32 summonses and doubled the fines. The children of Burston were physically attacked by the parson and the local constabulary in an effort to bully them to return to the state school. According to Tom Higdon (in his book 'The Burston Rebellion'), 'This kind of thing went on till it was put a stop to by the energetic action of Mr H and some of the enraged parents, while the boys themselves were given a free hand should the Reverence, the Rector, dare to gratuitously assault them again.'

There was other intimidation, nevertheless. Some of the locals found themselves dismissed from employment, small-holders were evicted from farmland. The parson personally evicted labourers from his Glebe lands. But the National Agricultural Labourers and Rural Workers Union fought the evictions in the court and won damages for the labourers.

In the meantime Tom Higdon continued to organise more union branches. He did this in over 10 villages, tramping on foot from one farm to another. He spent much of his time helping rural workers to achieve increases in wages. In his book about the Rebellion, Tom referred to his efforts: 'Mr H has always in his speeches to the labourers made a great point of the workers taking matters into their own hands'. He saw himself as no more than a catalyst.

STRIKE SCHOOL

It was obvious that the strikers and their dismissed teachers could not meet on the village green or in the old carpenter's shop forever, especially as the parson was intent on repossessing the carpenter's shop. The villagers and the children and the Higdons therefore decided that they would have to build a Strike School. And to do this there would have to be fund raising. So more rallies were organised, with people coming from all over the country. One of the children from the Burston strike school remembers vividly one of these rallies:

'Some wonderful meetings on the green and they used to come down, the miners and the railwaymen, and they had these big banners, huge banners, with beautiful coloured silks and all the gold tassels, it took a couple of men each side to carry the banners, come off the station and march through the village, you'd never seen anything like it. And then of course they held all these meetings and the money just poured in and then that's how this strike school was made...'

With all the rallies and all the fund raising events over £10,000 was eventually collected. Money came in from all over the world, from trade union branches and from people who

children to extend their opportunities. They also turned the school into a social centre and they organised entertainments for the whole community. This was highly unusual at that time: in most schools, schools were for lessons, nothing more. At Easter and Xmas they gave the children fruit and sweets. During the year they gave them clothes if they saw that some of the children were too poor. The Higdons themselves had no money: they survived on the low wages of a teacher and an assistant and lived in a rented tied cottage, but they did their best to help. On Labour Day (May 1st) they organised a festival in the village to celebrate. And they were not afraid to take unpopular decisions: in one instance, against the express wishes of the school governors, they shut the school down for a week because of an outbreak of whooping cough.

It was no surprise, therefore, with their involvement in the life of the local community, that when the villagers heard the Higdons had been sacked they organised to support them.

Of the 72 children, 66 came out on strike. The Higdons seeing the magnificent support from the children and the local people decided to stay and fight. The school would reopen on the village green, while the replacement schoolteacher would run the official school with her handful of children. The reaction of the parson to all of this was that it wouldn't last, it was an April Fool joke, and the Higdons would go and the official council school would be running again in a week's time.

That was not to be the case. A week later all the locals gathered in a mass assembly on the village green. People came from miles around. Altogether there were over 1500 people who came to support the Higdons and the strike. Trade unionists also came from far and wide, including George Edwards the founder of the Agricultural Labourers Union. The national newspapers sent reporters and photographers to cover the event. The 'Burston Rebellion', as it became known, was big news. The villagers decided at the rally to pay out of their own pockets for the upkeep of the strike school, including the upkeep of the Higdons. But in the meantime,

STRIKE SCHOOL CONTINUED

believed in liberty and socialism. The school was built and every stone used to build it was engraved with the names of the donor. There were miners lodges, NUR and other trade union branches, branches of the ILP, from railworkers in Melbourne, Australia, from individuals like Leo Tolstoy.

Outside the school, over the main entrance, a stone was erected and inscribed with the following words:

Mr TG Higdon and Mrs AK Higdon were unjustly dismissed from the Council School of this village on the 31st day of March 1914. This building was erected by public subscription, to protest against the action of the Education Authorities, TO PROVIDE A FREE SCHOOL: TO BE A CENTRE OF RURAL DEMOCRACY AND A MEMORIAL TO THE VILLAGERS' FIGHT FOR FREEDOM...

On the outside of the building was also inscribed the words: *Burston Strike School*. On the opening of the school over a thousand people gathered to pay tribute. The children thus moved into their own school.

In 1919 Kitty Higdon wrote:

'Many of the scholars who first came out on strike have, of course, left the school and gone to work, but forty children are still attending the Strike School, and such is the hold of this new democratic, educational and social movement upon the life of the village that most of the infants who come along find their way to the Strike School to take the places of the older children who are constantly leaving. Thus what began as a strike of school children on behalf of their teacher and was spoken of by the Rector Chairman of the School Managers as 'all moonshine', 'a nine days' wonder', etc.

has become a permanent Socialist Educational Cause and Institution, or as our comrade 'Casey' says, 'the first Trade Union School in England'.

The Strike School continued to flourish. And Tom Higdon continued with his union activities. Between 1914 and 1938 Tom acted as an official of the Agricultural Labourers Union while still carrying on his teaching at Burston. And in 1923 Tom coordinated a strike in the region. Many a time, too, he helped labourers who were facing eviction from their homes, helping to fight the cases directly and in court.

In 1926 Burston became a home to many miners' children, who were sent there during the General Strike. The Strike School became their home and Kitty and Tom helped to take care of their needs and all the villagers collected money, food and clothes to keep them nourished and clothed. The debt was being repaid. As a shining example of mutual aid and working class solidarity, Burston was leading the way. #Right up until 1939 the Strike School remained open. The village children chose the Strike School rather than the State School to be educated. But in 1939 Tom Higdon finally laid his body to rest and departed this world. Kitty was heart-broken, and she could not work anymore, nor even enter the Strike School where she and Tom had given up so much of their lives. Inevitably when she ceased to be involved with the school it was decided there was no point in continuing with the strike. The villagers officially declared the strike was over. It had lasted 25 years.

BURSTON TODAY

The Strike School at Burston is still there. It lies at the head of a green. It is now a museum open to all and devoted to the spirit of free education. Inside the



The march through Burston on April 1st 1914.

building are photographs and memorabilia relating to the Strike. For many years after the Strike School was closed the rallies continued, but then they stopped. In the last twelve months much restoration work has been done on the building. And this month a mass rally will have taken place commemorating the strike. The rally was organised by the TGWU in conjunction with the Burston Strike School Committee, open to all who believe in class justice, liberty and free education. Bands, marches, speeches and a mass picnic were scheduled. Today, walking around Burston, there is much pride in the Strike School. It is the centre-piece of this tiny village. Some of the original strike school children are still alive and remember with affection the Higdons. The villagers hope that there will be many more rallies in Burston, not just to commemorate the Strike, but to act as a focus for working class resistance.

There is no effective free school movement in this country. But the old

ideals and practices of non-statist socialism (which we call anarchism) and syndicalism (workers organising belowupwards) are still alive, if not often suppressed by the reformism of the trade union bureaucracies and the parliamentarians. Burston stood for a rejection of the bureaucrats and the politicians. Burston stood for direct democracy and for people taking direct control over their own lives. It stood for progress, understanding, mutual aid. The best tribute any of us can pay the strikers of the Burston, and to Tom and Kitty Higdon, is to rebuild that movement they were so proud of, to progress the cause of free schools, to rid all villages and towns of the tyrants and landowners and bosses, and to proclaim freedom and equality from all who wish to oppress. N.B. The Burston Rally took place on Sunday 11th September 1988. Burston is 4 miles from Diss, Norfolk. The Strike School is open all hours.

SOLIDARNOSC SOLD OUT ?

IS WALESA MANDATED?

As we go to press Lech Walesa is negotiating with the Polish Government over Solidarnosc. As such he called off the strike action that has hit Poland. The big question is whether or not Walesa is acting with the authority of those on strike/Solidarnosc (not necessarily the same thing) and if so whether he has a clear mandate.

We find it implausible that the Polish Government will negotiate with Solidarnosc, let alone give the strikers any recognition. But do they need recognition, which would be tantamount to quasi legalisation? If they became legal then presumably this would mean that the Polish authorities wish to work with the strikers/Solidarnosc. This would be a sell-out. If the authorities wished to be clever they will offer Walesa some kind of unofficial or official post, as a way of bringing Solidarnosc into corporate affairs. Solidarnosc would then be killed off with kindness. The Catholic Church would make a great match-maker in this marriage.

In our view the last thing Solidarnosc needs is legitimisation. If it is going to negotiate, it must do so from a position of strength, not when the strikes are called off. Nor is it any good allowing any single person to conduct the negotiations. To prevent sell-outs negotiations have to be carried out by a group of delegates at least, who are mandated by general agreement. If Walesa has no such mandate then he has to be disowned.

THE LATEST WAVE

The latest wave of strikes is the second this year, and is considered to better coordinated than the last outbreak. It should be noted that not all those involved are necessarily acting as members of Solidarnosc: it is as much a Solidarnosc strike as it is an 'unofficial' one. This is inevitable while Solidarnosc retains an inaccessible structure, caused by being underground but also by allowing policy making to remain in the hands of a few who can only loosely be described as delegates.

In this latest wave the main tactic used was occupation of the factory. Inevitably this led to a police siege. This happened with the miners at Manifest Lipcowy (where 2500 struck) and at Morcinek (where 400 came out in solidarity). The police tactic was to starve the strikers of food and support. Very quickly, though, the solidarity widened and a

total of 12 pits were hit by the strikes. The strikers demanded recognition of Solidarnosc as well as a freeze on prices (inflation is at a massive 60%) and an increase in wages.

The strike action soon spread to other areas. The dockers came out in Szczecin (some 6000) and barricades were put up around the port area. Troops were despatched to place the strikers under siege. But then public transport workers on the buses and trams came out in sympathy. Following this over 1000 miners came out at Sklaskie Piekay (near Katowice) and a further 600 struck at the Moszczynica pit. There was further escalation when workers at the Lenin shipyard at Gdansk downed tools and took occupation. The response of the authorities to this was to impose a curfew throughout the country. It was at this stage that Lech Walesa offered to negotiate, which was at first refused.

At this point in time there were 20 different strikes taking place affecting, but not involving, over 100,000 workers.

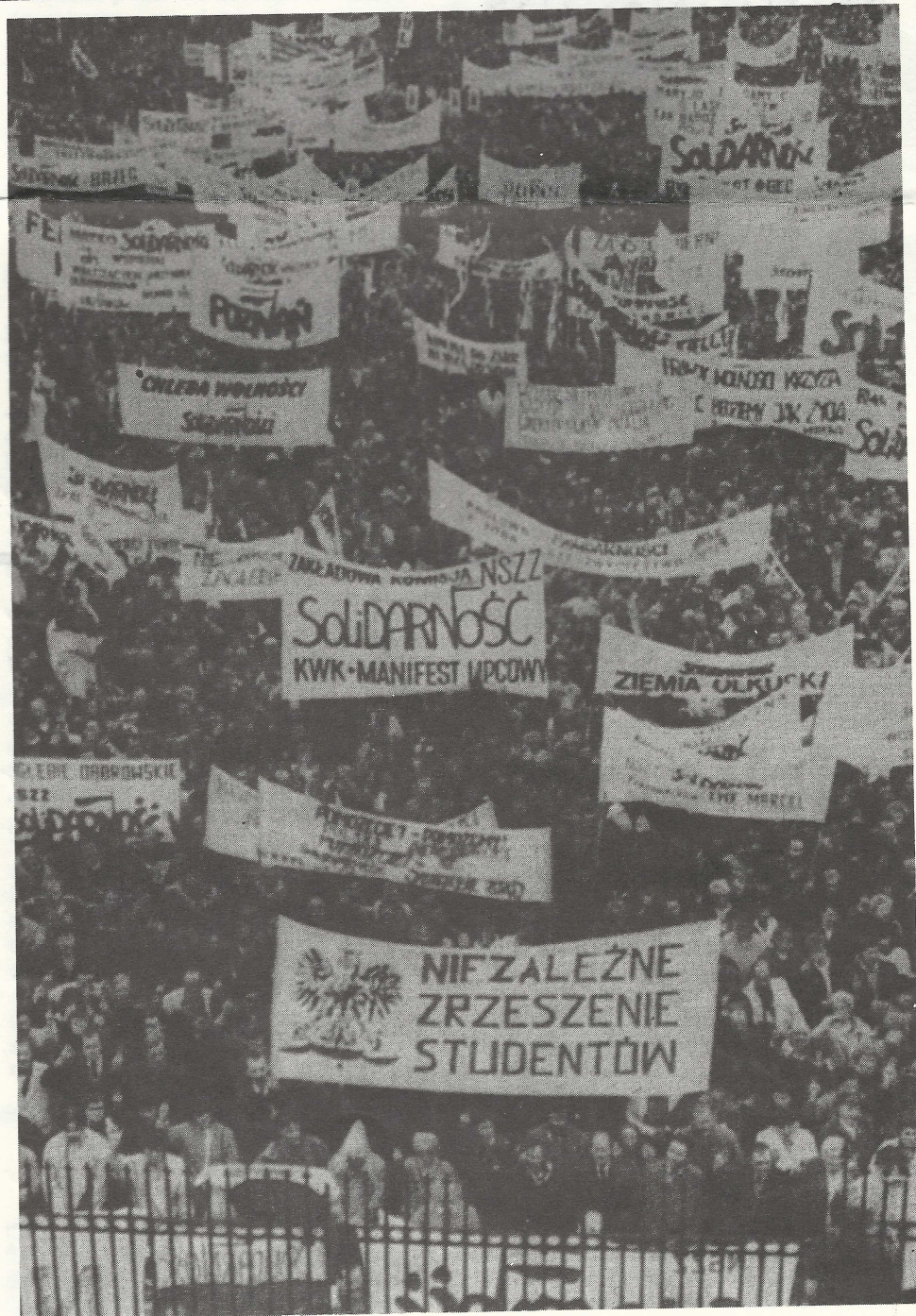
The main physical attacks by the authorities were in Silesia (where police forced strikers in some of the pits to capitulate) and in Szczecin (where riot police stormed three tram depots and arrested half of those on strike). Despite this the strikers elsewhere remained solid.

The Western media hailed the offer of talks by the authorities with Walesa as a major breakthrough. But the authorities are hardly going to give everything up that easily. Negotiations without a firm mandate from the grassroots will lead to a setback which Solidarnosc can ill afford.

RETURN TO WORK

Walesa's call for a return to work amounted to nothing less than sabotage. The Lenin shipyard in Gdansk was one of the first to go back. Strikers at Stalowa Wola and Szczecin stayed out longer, but eventually capitulated. Miners at Lipcowy, who were the first to come out on strike, were the last to go back. However, while all this was going on a new strike erupted at Zdunska Wola when two hundred transport workers struck for higher wages (which they got) and earlier retirement.

Most of the strikers went back reluctantly against their better judgement. In doing this they have made a crucial mistake. The government essentially seeks to co-opt the



union movement. Already Walesa has stated that if Solidarnosc is legalised he will accept a non-political role for Solidarnosc. By this he does not mean syndicalism but trade unionism limited to the workplace under state control. This will lead the workers back to square one. The rank and file of Solidarnosc has no other choice but to reorganise itself outside of any

state or quasi-state structure and if Walesa is unable to go along with this then he must be disowned.

Already Walesa has been quoted as saying: 'Poland does not need strikes...I extinguished the strikes, and I will extinguish any others that happen.' Enough said!

BOOK REVIEW

INSIDE THE LEAGUE

By Jon Anderson and Scott Anderson.
Published by Dodd & Mead, 322p-p, price \$19.95.

The definitive expose on the World Anti-Communist League. The book provides proof that WACL functions as an umbrella organisation for such groups as the Guatemalan Nationalist Democratic Movement, the Honduran Anti-Democratic Movement and El Salvador's Nationalist Republican Alliance — all of which have been implicated with death squad activities.

The Andersons show, too, the essential fascist nature of WACL. Indeed in 1984 a WACL conference was chaired by none

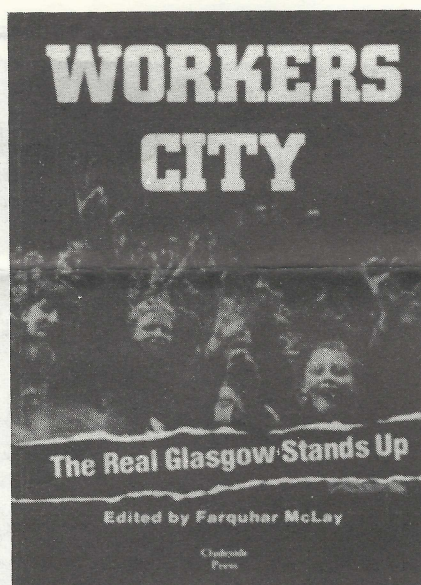
other than General Alfredo Stroessner, the head of state for Paraguay and an avowed fascist who gave refuge to many well known Nazi war criminals, including Mengele.

Inside The League sheds light on the past of many of WACL's senior members and affiliated sections. One such person is Chirila Ciuntu, who was a member of the Romanian Iron Guard, which was founded in the '30's and dedicated to 'purging Romania of Jews, foreigners, communists and Freemasons'. Under the Iron Guard hundreds of thousands of Jews were taken to the slaughterhouses where they were hung on meathooks and their throats slit; others were beheaded. Many of the 'carcasses' skinned alive. Ciuntu has been wanted for years by the Rumanian authorities for his part in these atrocities. He has lived in Canada for the past 30 years, working for WACL.

WORKERS CITY: the real Glasgow stands up.

Ed. Farquhar McLay (Clydeside Press 2.95)

Essays, stories and poems plus reminiscences of the real Glasgow, with loads of Anarchist and Socialist comment, but it's more than a nostalgic assertion of what Glasgow always stood for, of main interest to Glaswegians, or a protest at the yuppification of the tourist attraction they now want to build.



All over the world there are villages, towns and cities with once living traditions of struggle and hardship, high intelligence and resistance, which have finally been transformed. Now you see English villages where every shop is a gifte shoppe; Welsh valleys where you can visit mine museums in your beach shorts and see how the miners once worked; go on gypsy caravan tours where gypsies have finally been driven out or barge tours along trendified canals; see how the quaint workers lived in folksy Ireland or visit the Blackpool costas of Spain from which the original worker population was bought out cheap or carried head first.

Places like Glasgow suffered so much hardship and their native wit and intelligence offered so much resistance, that they generated tremendous political movement, from inside which the wheeler-dealers emerged, a wooden horse that let in the Garden City army.

It sounds a depressing story, but this isn't a depressing book and local humour shines through stories of days not too far away. References to so many old friends in Glasgow anarcho-syndicalist circles will be of special interest to our readers, even, or perhaps especially, the under-40s who can be excused for not knowing that the anarcho-syndicalist message was once received enthusiastically by thousands of workers at factory gates where now just the odd A-Punk sign is seen on a deserted facade.

the tour can be obtained from **Peasants Revolt, Box 7, Acorn Bookshop, 17 Chatham St, Reading RG1 7SF.**

BLACK FLAG TAPE

A new 9-track benefit tape, with proceeds going to *Black Flag*, has been produced. It is called 'A Jerk Off In The Face Of Capital' and includes a booklet. It's available from Pete Pax, c/o 1 in 12 Club, 21-23 Albion Street, Bradford 1, West Yorkshire (tel Bradford 7344160). Thanks Pete.

EAST ANGLIAN CONTACTS

Comrades in East Anglia can contact each other via Cambridge DAM, Box DAM, Cambridge Free Press, 25 Gwydir Street, Cambridge, CB1 2LG; or Norwich DAM, Box DAM, The Greenhouse, 48 Bethel St, Norwich.

The *State Adversary* is a lively mag coming out in New Zealand, where there is a lively young movement. The Anarchist Alliance of Aotearoa held its seventh Kiwi Anarchist Unconvention 23-24 Sept. August issue with update on the unconvention, The State Adversary costs \$10 donation for an airmail sub for a year from: P.O.Box 78-104

Grey Lynn
Auckland
New Zealand

The Phoney International

J Muhrmann-Lund, a comrade from Denmark, has informed us that the SAC, the Swedish syndicalist union, is organising an international conference on behalf of the phoney CNT. He wrote to the SAC paper, Arbetaren, protesting — but they refused to publish his letter in the paper and replied by attacking Black Flag.

One of the editors of Arbetaren, a certain Leif Hallstan, told our comrade that he had been misinformed about the CNT (the phoneys) and that he should not rely on *Black Flag* as a proper source of information, that he should not "spread false rumours" (which he personally thought was "counter-revolutionary") and that his allegations against the phoneys were "hardly of interest to the readers outside of the SAC". We wonder if the rank and file of the SAC go along with this way of thinking? If the members of the SAC seek revolutionary syndicalism or anarcho-syndicalism then they will first of all need to wake up to the manoeuvrings which their elected officials are indulging in.

The phoney CNT has for some time now been trying to organise a phoney international to rival the International Workers Association as well as the IFA (the anarchist International). They began putting out feelers 18 months ago. We know for a fact that they have been in contact with the UTCL (libertarian communists) in France over this, as well as the Anarchist Communist Federation in Britain (via their International Secretary, Nick Heath).

One of the main disagreements, but by no means the only source of conflict, which led to the phoneys splitting from the CNT-AIT is over the question of the factory committees, originally set up by Franco as a form of corporate unionism. In voting for representatives for these committees the workers end up voting for a system that allows delegates from different union traditions, including the far-right and social democrats, to represent the whole factory. The inevitable result is a committee that cannot function but which plays straight into the hands of management. It's the equivalent of parliamentary power-sharing translated into union terms. In playing this game the phoney CNT ends up as a series of committee bureaucrats who represent their voters in the workplace, and nowhere else, and who share overall responsibilities for creating policy with other committee bureaucrats with totally different ideas and practices.

The CNT-AIT has consistently opposed this and has instead promoted workers assemblies, where there is no committee voted in as part of a corporate structure but where the workers become self-managed and where the economic struggle extends beyond the workplace — not through vague political campaigns but through a consolidation of collectivisation involving the whole community.

There have been those who, since the split took place, have preferred to sit on the fence, saying that there is genuineness on both sides. To a certain extent they are

right, but if these fence-sitters are themselves genuine they should admit that tactical or pragmatic moves to make gains at the expense of reformism (wrapped under the cloak of Franco's corporate fascism) can never be sanctioned.

To return to the proposed phoney International, at this stage we have no idea as to exactly who all the participants at the conference will be. But from the phoneys' own literature we do know which organisations they claim to have affinity with. We have received a copy of one of the phoney CNT's main propaganda organs that list these organisations/groups, some of which are predictable, others surprising. Together they make strange bed-fellows.

The less surprising ones include the SAC, Hull Syndicalists and the UTCL. But then curiously this list goes on to include the Spanish section of the Fourth International as well as the Communist Party of Great Britain (also trotskysts). For some time, too, the phoney CNT have been trying, unsuccessfully, to ingratiate themselves with member sections of the anarchist International, the IFA, in the hope that they can undermine the IFA's traditional support for the IWA. This list includes all the IFA sections, presumably because the phoney CNT has some vain hope of winning over those sections. This is hardly plausible given that the Spanish section, for one, is aggressively against the phoneys. Finally, there is a fourth group of organisations/groups, whom the phoneys perceive as being neutral, but who they would hope will lend them support. These include the IWW in North America, which has always had a strong supportive relationship to the IWA.

From this list it can be seen that the strategy of the phoneys is threefold: to divide and destroy the anarchist International, to set up an opposing international to the anarcho-syndicalist International, and to involve a number of lesser organisations which have propaganda value.

In exposing this we hope that genuine organisations that wish to maintain the anarchist International and who see no gain by the setting up of a more reformist syndicalist international, will join us in countering these moves.

LETTER

I've just started reading Black Flag regularly. Before now, I had always steered clear of anarchist publications as every one I read before seemed to be a series of heroic posturing, cliched slogans, simplistic generalisations and shallow 'Beginners guide' style articles, either full of rabid knee-jerk angst or worse, patronisingly obvious statements that assume you can't draw your own conclusions. It's a real relief to read a piece of writing that is rational and practical, down at street level instead of in the clouds.

Alex

Answers to Quiz

1. The Tories supported the 'divine right' of King James II who wanted the country to revert to Catholicism (and was therefore backed by France and the Catholic League of nations which it led; and, to their disaster, by the Irish Catholics). The Whigs, and most English parliamentarians, supported the Prince of Orange, the invading William IV — so did the Vatican, since the Pope saw King Billy's Protestant League would curb French leadership of the Catholic world. They celebrated his victory with fireworks.
2. When Berlin was under Russian threat, President John F. Kennedy announced "Ich bin ein Berliner" — he might have got the point more if it had been Hamburg or Frankfurt under threat.
3. Taking a boat back from the Argentine,

and knowing first-class passengers were never checked, they bought first-class tickets and mingled with the upper class twits, passing themselves off as football celebrities to explain their proletarian presence. (It is said Ascaso nearly blew it by his ignorance when someone started a passionate sporting discussion!)

4. Most European fascists support the IRA and oppose the British flag which they associate with anti-fascism; our local headbangers attack the IRA and associate the Union Jack with fascism — also shouting 'We won the war' (which some German Nazis understandably don't like) when giving the Nazi salute.
5. The Ritz Hotel, Madrid — used as a hospital during the civil war, to which many dying militia (including Durruti) were taken.
6. Public bathing.